

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECOGNIZING MS. KRISTEN WHITE
AS THE 2018 SANTA ROSA COUN-
TY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

HON. MATT GAETZ

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. GAETZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Ms. Kristen White as the 2018 Santa Rosa County Teacher of the Year. Ms. Brown has a long history of serving the Santa Rosa County School District with exceptional passion and an unwavering commitment to helping her students.

In Northwest Florida, we are fortunate to have some of the best teachers in the Nation. It is recognized that the teaching profession is one of the most difficult yet rewarding professions in existence. Ms. White has exceptionally performed her teaching duties, while also striving to be an active and supportive member of her community.

Ms. White has served as an elementary reading and writing intervention teacher at East Milton Elementary and coordinates the Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (STEAM) Innovate Lab, which serves K–5 students. She also provides professional development to teachers, coordinates Discovery education assessments, and collects and interprets data for grade levels.

Previously she has served as a Kindergarten teacher and grade level chair. Her support and mentoring extends far beyond the walls of her classroom through her willingness to serve as a Professional Learning Community facilitator. I commend Ms. White for her steadfast willingness to serve those that matter most, the students and youth of our Nation.

For all of her admirable contributions, I am truly proud to have Ms. White as a constituent in Florida's First Congressional District.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Ms. Kristen White for her accomplishments and her commitment to excellence in the Santa Rosa County School District. I thank her for her service and wish her all the best for continued success.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COLO-
NEL STEVE “THIRSTY” SMITH
FOR REACHING 10,000 FLYING
HOURS IN A B-52 BOMBER

HON. MIKE JOHNSON

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. JOHNSON of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I rise today to commend the achievements of Lieutenant Colonel Steve “Thirsty” Smith for making United States Air Force history on March 3, 2017 by being the only currently serving member of the United States Air Force to reach 10,000 flying

hours in a B-52 heavy bomber, officially labeled a B-52 Stratofortress, and contributing to the backbone of the manned strategic bomber force for the United States.

Lt. Colonel Smith joined the United States Air Force after graduating from the ROTC program at the University of Mississippi. He continued on to graduate navigation school at Mather Air Force Base in 1985 where he earned his wings and received his first assignment for the B-52.

As a navigator with the 93rd Bomb Squadron belonging to the 917th Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, Lt. Colonel Smith has distinguished himself as one of our nation's most experienced navigators. He spent seven years on active duty before becoming a reservist for over 20 years. He has flown 10,000 B-52 hours and 1,819 B-52 sorties including 496 combat hours and 42 combat sorties over the span of four different wars; Operations Desert Storm, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and Inherent Resolve. He was awarded the Air Medal in 1991 and the Aerial Achievement Medal in 2002 and 2004.

His expertise with the B-52 played an instrumental role in modernizing the aircraft with a targeting pod that provides greater accuracy leading to more successful missions. Additionally, he has been an inspiration to many young navigators as a flight instructor, teaching over 180 young weapons systems officers at Barksdale Air Force Base in the same aircraft.

Dating back to World War I, the 93rd Bomb Squadron has repeatedly distinguished itself in its contributions to the security of the United States during deployments around the world. This distinction has continued today with global demonstrations of strategic attack capabilities.

Lt. Colonel Smith is greatly regarded throughout the Air Force and Louisiana communities and is known as a humble man who has selflessly given back to the country he loves so dearly. He has earned widespread respect for his continued commitment to serve in defense of our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, it is my pleasure to join a grateful community in saluting his outstanding achievements. My wife Kelly and I thank Lt. Colonel Smith for his dedicated services and wish him all the best for continued success in what is an already remarkable career.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE
KHOJALY MASSACRE

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor all those lost in the Khojaly Massacre. On February 25, 1992, a little more than 25 years ago, over 600 people were brutally murdered in Khojaly, Azerbaijan. These were

mostly elderly men, women, and children—inocent victims that should have never been part of such a heartbreaking tragedy. It is essential that we take the time every year to remember those who lost their lives during this horrific event in Azerbaijan. Their unwilling sacrifice continues to serve as a reminder to hold fast to the principles of democracy.

Azerbaijan is a strong partner of the United States in a strategically critical and compound region of the world. I ask my colleagues to join me and our Azerbaijani friends in commemorating the tragedy that occurred in the town of Khojaly.

HONORING SAM SCINTA FOR HIS
DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE
COMMUNITY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Mr. Sam Scinta, a dedicated volunteer for the Democratic Party and resident of Tonawanda, New York. Sam's tireless service is recognized today by his friends on the City of Tonawanda Democratic Committee. Sam has committed countless hours to further Democratic causes in our community and is most deserving of the City of Tonawanda Democratic Committee's Man of the Year Award.

Sam was raised in Buffalo, New York where he attended Public School 76 and Hutchinson Central High School. In 1954, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy. He is a Korean War Veteran and worked in aviation as a line captain and mechanic. He served in Kingsville, Texas, in a Patrol Squadron in San Diego, and in the Philippine Islands, until he was discharged in 1958.

In 1959, Sam began his career with the Erie Rail Road as a locomotive fireman and was promoted to locomotive engineer in 1966. When the Erie Rail Road merged with the Lackawanna Rail Road, he became active in the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen as an organizer, rising to the rank of Vice President, then Local Chairman. Following a union merge he became Local Chairman of the United Transportation Union. In 1976, he went to work for Con Rail after the North East Railroads merged, where he served as a locomotive engineer until his retirement in 1999.

Sam moved to Tonawanda in 1998 and following his retirement became active in the City of Tonawanda Democratic Committee and has served as Vice Chairman of the Committee for over a decade. One example of his dedication is Sam's command of the Smoothie Booth for the City Committee's fundraiser during Canal Fest since 2003. He constructs the booth, does the scheduling, works in the booth and is there from open to closing all 8 days. Each year, Sam puts in a long day at the Committee's annual picnic in August. Sam is also the proud custodian of the Committee's banner.

• This “bullet” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

As a volunteer on Hillary Clinton's successful campaign for Senator in 2000, and at Congresswoman LOUISE SLAUGHTER's campaign headquarters in 2001, Sam worked tirelessly. In 2005 he hopped on board Legislator Michele Iannello's campaign. Following her victory, Sam went to work for Legislator Iannello in her district office for 2006 and 2007. In 2008, he went to work for the Erie County Board of Elections and retired again in June, 2016.

Sam is the loving father of Sam James Scinta and daughter-in-law Kerry, and a proud grandfather to Sam Jr. and Anthony. As a proud family man, while Sam's son was young, Sam coached and served as President of the Little League at Public School 81 in the 1970's.

Mr. Speaker, I honor Mr. Sam Scinta and his dedication to Democratic politics and our community. Sam's commitment and dependability are admirable and I am pleased to be able to recognize him today with the City of Tonawanda Democratic Committee as they present to him their Man of the Year Award.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SCOTT TAYLOR

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Speaker, due to travel with President Trump, I was unable to attend votes. Had I been present, I would have voted nay on Roll Call No. 122, yea on Roll Call No. 123, nay on Roll Call No. 124, nay on Roll Call No. 125, and yea on Roll Call No. 126.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE WHISNANTS

HON. MARK MEADOWS

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. MEADOWS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize The Whisnants, a musical ensemble from Morganton, North Carolina. On behalf of the people of Western North Carolina, I would like to congratulate The Whisnants for nearly 50 years of the continued growth of their remarkable ministry.

This ministry began many years ago in 1970, when John and Betty Whisnant and their family began singing gospel music in Morganton, North Carolina. The group has expanded over the years, with members coming and going, but they have always remained true to their mission. This family has asked God to use their ministry to touch more and more lives, and he has clearly used their music to do so. In the 47 years since they got their start, the Whisnants have performed across the nation and the world. The Whisnants have been recognized as leaders in gospel music, and their songs have frequently been awarded top accolades throughout their career.

As the family's ministry continues to grow and as new generations of Whisnants take new roles, they do so with my prayers and continued best wishes. The Whisnants have been extraordinary representatives of our

community across our state and nation. On behalf of the people of Western North Carolina, it's my honor to recognize them on this important family milestone.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I was unable to cast votes on Monday February 27, 2017 due to a family medical emergency. Had I been present I would have voted: Roll Call No. 100: YEA, Roll Call No. 101: NO, and Roll Call No. 102: YEA.

HONORING GAYLE SYPOSS FOR HER DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Mr. HIGGINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, my hometown county Democratic committee gathered recently to honor the longtime chair of the City of Tonawanda Democratic committee, Gayle Syposs, to commemorate her service both to her community and to the Democratic Party.

A career public servant, Gayle has in the past served as an elected member of her hometown city council, as a civil servant and appointed public servant in county government, and at present once again serving her hometown as the Tonawanda City Clerk, where its elected leadership—be they Republican or Democratically affiliated—agree that her experience and institutional knowledge was critically important when the longtime incumbent city clerk retired in 2015.

But it is how Gayle came to public life that helps illustrate what is great about America, and about how committed people, working together, can be an effective voice for the communities they love.

In the 1970s, New York State government had plans to "improve" transportation in the city of Tonawanda—but the local community didn't think much of it. The state wanted to change Niagara Street into a four lane highway, which would have turned this main thoroughfare adjacent to the city's waterfront parks into a dangerous highway totally not in keeping with the needs and wants of city residents, destroying the city's character in the process.

This ill-conceived action midwived the birth of a great civic and political activist in Gayle Syposs. After reading a newspaper article detailing the number of old-growth trees destined to be removed to build this highway, Gayle formed a citizens' committee that successfully fought the state's top-down plan, preserving Niagara Street and the character of her hometown the right way, in a grassroots, bottom-up fashion, energizing and educating neighbors to join the fight.

Today, Niagara Street remains as it was, a low-speed thoroughfare adjacent to county and city parks, preserved, we hope, in per-

petuity for the enjoyment of residents and families during each of Western New York's great four seasons. Gayle's activism spawned a career in public service and politics, leading her to 6 non-consecutive terms on the city council, and into greater governmental and political activism—something from which so many Western New York Democrats have benefited.

Indeed, while I have known Gayle for the better part of thirty years, I have come to benefit most directly since her city was included into my congressional district in 2012. In addition to being a steadfast supporter, Gayle has been a friend and an important link for me and for my staff to her local community—a service she has been kind enough to provide to me and to the people I work to serve.

Gayle is, as I mentioned, currently the chair of the city of Tonawanda's Democratic Committee, but that is only one of many titles she has held. While she has served as chair as long as many of us can remember, she also serves as Chair of the Erie County Association of Town Chairs, as Treasurer of the county Democratic party, and as a member of the New York State Democratic Committee.

A few weeks ago, Gayle was honored by our Erie County Democratic Committee as the 2017 recipient of the Joseph F. Crangle Legacy Award. Named for our legendary former county and state chairman, this award is the gold standard for local Democrats; it rightfully raises Gayle's name among the great leaders of our party.

But no one should imagine that earning this award will mean that Gayle will slow down anytime soon. Gayle will likely read this speech, reflect upon it for a few moments, and quickly move on to a call she recently received about a broken sidewalk, or pass along the résumé of a neighbor's college-aged grandson who is looking for an opportunity as he works his way through college. Gayle's dedication to her country, her community and, yes, her party, represent all that is great about Western New York, and I am thankful for the opportunity to honor her and to have the House take note of the many positive contributions she has made throughout our community.

HONORING MS. AILEEN CLARKE HERNANDEZ

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, March 6, 2017

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the extraordinary life of Aileen Clarke Hernandez. With her passing on February 13, 2017 in Irvine, California, I look to recognize her passion for women's equality, and the invaluable influence it has had on our nation.

Aileen was born in Brooklyn on May 23, 1926, to Charles Henry Clarke, and Ethel Louise Hall. Ms. Hernandez excelled in school and graduated magna cum laude from Howard University, where she was drawn into politics and worked with the NAACP. In 1951, she took an organizing job with the West Coast division of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.

Her work with the Garment Workers Union brought her to California, and led to her involvement in California politics and government, where she eventually was appointed as